

Oct 29, 2017



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

The highest form of prayer comes from the depths of a humble heart

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

So lift up your heart to the heavens; There's a loving and kind Father there Who offers release and comfort and peace In the silent communion of prayer.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven

(Neh 1:4 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Sept 8, 2012)

Series: Covenants with God

UNIT: An Everlasting Covenant

NEXT WEEK

Faithful God, Unfaithful People

(Num 25:10-13; 1 Sam 2:30-36)

God's Covenant with the Returned Exiles Nehemiah 9:32-38; 10:28-29

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reviews the understanding of the covenant that God's people made related to **God's Covenant with the Returning Exiles**. The **study's aim** is to sense the importance of periodic covenants with God to obey Him. The **study's application** is to covenant with God to give renewed obedience in any neglected areas in our lives.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Our text comes in the midst of a great prayer of confession and recommitment on the part of the returned exiles following the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. An outbreak of revival is described in Nehemiah 8; this prepared the people to return in obedience to God. As part of this turning, they remembered God's covenant (9:32) and poured out their hearts afresh to Him. This is no doubt one of the longest prayers in the Bible. The presumption of the prayer is that because God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, we can always return to Him, no matter how much we have wandered. Israel wandered mightily over their long history in the Promised Land. As this history was recounted in the long prayer of Nehemiah 9:5-38, we see two simple themes: "God's faithfulness" and "Israel's unfaithfulness." Our text clearly reflects this. God was just in everything He did, and Israel was always prone to wickedness. Line by line the prayer confesses the glory of God in Israel's history, as well as Israel's failures. It mentions Abraham, to whom the covenant was first given, the Exodus, the wandering in the wilderness, the conquest, the periods of the judges and kings and prophets, continuing all the way up to the Exile and return. God was always faithful, but Israel consistently failed to respond to Him in faith and obedience. All this made for a very long prayer! The intent of the prayer was that through confession and petition the people might recommit themselves to covenant obedience (Neh. 9:38). As chapter 10 relates, several aspects of Israel's covenant obligations were renewed, including such practices as tithes and Sabbath observances. The people were recommitting themselves to the covenant that God had given the nation centuries before, a covenant that had fallen into neglect for so long. We learn some things about recommitment through this text. First of all, we learn that recommitment is invited by God's covenant faithfulness. God is always willing to bless His people when they return to Him in repentance and obedience. We all fall into neglectfulness and sin at times. But we see that God is always ready to forgive (Neh. 9:17). God is a pardoning God who wants a relationship with us. We should never be afraid to seek the Lord's face afresh. We also learn that recommitment lends support to our faithfulness to God. It really is not recommitment if this does not happen. The Israelites wrote down their commitments on this special day. They returned to the authority of God's Word and sought to return to faithful obedience. That is what should emerge in our times of recommitment. Finally, we learn that recommitment brings joy. Although there were some tears in this section of Nehemiah, the more significant result was fullness of joy as the people realized that they could return to God (cf. 12:27). Because God is faithful to His covenant promises and filled with mercy, we can joyfully repent, confess, and return obediently to God.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Failure to Keep the Covenant (Neh 9:32-37)

Faithfulness of God (32-33)

God is faithful because He never changes (Mal 3:6)

God is faithful because He never fails (Zeph 3:5)

God is faithful because of His love for His creation (Ps 36:5-7)

God is faithful because He stands firm forever (Ps 89:1-2)

God is faithful because He is merciful and forgiving (Dan 9:9)

Unfaithfulness of the people (34-35)

Unfaithfulness that comes from our own actions (Ps 7:15-16)

Unfaithfulness that is caused by bad choices (Prov 1:29-31)

Unfaithfulness that comes from disobedience (Jer 18:9-10)

Unfaithfulness that comes from forsaking God's word (Jer 9:13-14)

Unfaithfulness that comes from violating God's covenant (Deut 17:2-5)

Unfaithfulness that blasphemes God's Name (Rom 2:23-24)

Unfaithfulness that comes from not remaining faithful to God's covenant (Heb 8:9)

Experiencing the consequences (36-37)

Consequences of God's pronouncement of punishment (Num 16:28-33)

Consequences of man's pronouncement of punishment (Dan 6:24)

Consequences of sharing the punishment of sin (Josh 7:20-24)

Consequences of not partaking of the good things of God (Jer 29:32)

Recommitment to the Covenant (Neh 9:38; 10:28-29)

Recommit by agreement and signing (9:38; 10:28)

Agreement and signing by confirming and pledging ourselves (2 Kings 23:3)

Agreement and signing by seeking God with all our heart and soul (2 Chron 15:12)

Agreement and signing by committing to be God's people (2 Chron 23:16)

Agreement and signing so that God's anger would turn away from us (2 Chron 29:10)

Agreement and signing by separating from foreigners (Neh 9:2)

Recommit through an oath and curse (29)

A curse if they did not obey the covenant (Deut 27:26)

An oath made with loud acclamation and shouting (2 Chron 15:14)

An oath made with confirmation (Ps 119:106)

An oath made based on help from the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:27)